somebody with a similar-sounding name who was on deck to be a Duke, and—dear me! what an outrage! He sputtered in a shrill voice, and when he got the noose off ran round and round trying to borrow a switch to whip somebody with. The girl was pretty mad too; but she didn't do much talking. She didn't need to: the near-Duke was equal to that part. She spoke to him sharply once when he was about to mention her name.

"'And this lady,' he squeaked, 'this is Miss—'

"'Sir!' she said. 'Never mind that!'

"She recognized Bruce and me at first glance, I haven't the least doubt; but under the circumstances there wasn't much for her to say. Then the bluecoats nabbed us. What, why, and which? Bruce just sat on his black, grinning carelessly, and I wound up my rope unconcerned. I saw Bruce stoop and whisper a few words to one of the cops, then something that might have been a bill passed between them, and all at once every bluecoat dusted his hands of us, stood off grinning very friendly, and watched the near-Duke trying to regain the saddle of his horse, which somebody had caught for him.

"Bruce had to ride close to the girl to get his rope loose; he even had to touch her. I thought she might lash him with her riding whip; but she didn't.

"'I follow suit when I have the cards,' I heard him say.

"She didn't take the trouble to answer him: just turned away her head and bit her lip. By that time the little man had climbed aboard his horse and came up red and puffing.

"'You'll hear more of this!' he threatened.

"'Forget it,' Bruce said, laughing.

"There was a general din of noise around, the police were hustling the crowd back good naturedly, and everybody guying the Britisher; so he spurred up his horse and rode off, the girl with him, terrible uppish.

"'Who's your friend on the police force?' I asked Bruce as we rode away. 'You must have said the right thing, anyhow.'

"'Told 'em we were all with Doc Carson's Wild West,' he said, 'and were advertising the show. Told 'em that fellow you roped was supposed to make a row and claim to be all kinds of a swell. I also slipped them the price of at least one round of something decent. It was worth it, don't you think?'

"'That ought to even up the scores fairly well, anyhow,' I said. 'She took you for a tramp up country, and you made the cops believe she was a showgirl in Central Park. I should think you could call it square!'

UNDER the circumstances that should have been the last of it; but it wasn't. I noticed in a few days that Bruce had something on his mind. He got to going around with a far-away look in his eyes, like a calf that's lost its near relatives. Once in awhile he'd let a word drop about the girl, and I had a sneaking idea of what was worrying him. One day he showed up all afire and full of talk.

"'Harve,' he said, 'what do you reckon now? I've found out all about her. Who do you think she is?'

"'Who do I think who is?' I said. 'Don't tell me you've discovered my cousin Elsie from Kansas in this here town?'

"'*The girl*,' he said, not paying any attention. 'I know her folks, her brother everything. Why, Harve, her brother and I were old chums at college!'

"'Then it's all off,' I said. 'Give me a hint about what to buy for the wedding present.'

"'Shut up!' he said dreamy like. 'She hates me worse than poison, I haven't a doubt; but I'm going to call on the old folks just the same. Her father is George C. Coates,—the Wall Street Coates,—and her brother is old Tom Coates, Yale's great halfback. Just think of that! Ain't that funny?'

"'Tickles me to death,' I said. 'What's her name, and how'd you find it all out, Hawkshaw?'

"'Saw Tom with her in an auto this morning,' he said. 'He introduced me. She's his sister Dorothy. Did she freeze me, Harve, did she? She tried to; but she couldn't go very far without giving herself away. Man, I laughed to myself! I told her she reminded me of a young lady I knew, by name Scruggins. You ought to have seen her! I'm going to call tomorrow.' And away he went, as crazy as the germ of insanity itself.

"Now, as to Bruce Stanford's doings wholly in the following two weeks I couldn't say. He went clean locoed about Miss Dorothy Coates, and from the general trend of his disjointed remarks I gathered that he struck all kinds of cactuses, dog-holes, and quicksands.

"'Harve,' he said one day, 'she can't see a blamed bit of difference between freak missionary confabs with a stranger, just for fun, and a ranch owner trailing around over the country with a Wild West Show just to kill time and break the monotony. Says one's as sensible as the other.'

"'She's right,' I said. 'We're all Idle Rich together.'

"He shook his head. He couldn't just see it. He had poor luck making love to her. You never saw a worse battered man than he was the night she turned him down cold and distinct when he asked for a show in the game.

WHAT happened at last wasn't on the posters—it hardly ever is. We were giving the night performance, and had 'em banked to the top row. Lots of swell people in the boxes too, every seat full up. All was lovely, Indians sober, the stage holdup, the roping, riding, shooting, everything right up to high standard, audience well pleased, and old Doc Carson gibbering with joy.

"'Harve,' said Bruce to me, 'ride around the amphitheater with me, and I'll show you the Coates family. They're all here tonight.'

"We rode around and saw them; but I noticed the girl wasn't waving any handkerchiefs or throwing any posies in our direction. Bruce swept his big hat off very politely as we rode by their box, and I did likewise. They all bowed and smiled but the girl: she was pretty well froze up and never smiled a smile. My old friend looked down his nose at that.

"The performance went along smoothly until the buffalo hunt was pulled off. We had our six head, which comprised the herd, led by an old one-eyed bull, and the Indians stalked 'em from behind dummy hills, dashed out on ponies, and shot 'em with rubber-tipped arrows most cruel and barbarous. Of course the buffalo chucked their heads down and kicked up the dirt in all directions, and with the Indians, painted and whooping after 'em, it made a very realistic hunt on a small scale. We had a netting around the arena to keep them off the people; for a buffalo, when he gets his head down, never looks where he's going. When they hit that wire net, though, it turned 'em.

"That night they were whooping it up like a hundred years ago on the Nebraska plains. Every time a buffalo would hit the net the people sitting on the other side would climb over each others' heads until they got wise that there was no danger. There was danger, though, and we didn't know it. It must have been a weak place in the wire, and it chanced that old One-eye found it. He was a big rascal, and pretty mean too. He wouldn't hesitate to charge a man if he happened to be in a bad humor.

"It was close to the Coates' box. Just beyond them from where Bruce and me sat on our horses a double row of women and kids occupied the lower tier of seats. Here came old One-Eye, head down, and snorting mad, with a yelling Indian on each side. Straight for the women and kids he scampered. When he hit the net, instead of being thrown back on his marrowbones as expected, *he went through!* Not all at once, mind you; for he was tangled up considerably and the broken wire ends tore at his mane and pricked his hide, which only made him madder.

"At last he scraped through, sized up the scrambling crowd, and dropped his head to charge 'em. Then something else happened.

DOROTHY COATES dropped over the side of their box—she was the nearest in their party—and ran between old One-Eye and the screeching kids. Man! It was a crazy thing for a girl to do, and nervy too when you come to think of it. She had nothing but her little bare hands to fight him with, either.

"Bruce left his horse while going at a run, over that ten-foot fence he went, lit on his hands and knees, and was up like a rubber ball. Three leaps, and he was between the girl and the bull, and I saw his .44 in his hand.

"'There goes a thousand dollars of real money!' I thought to myself: for I knew he'd kill that buffalo then and there, and so he did. When he shot the bull was so close that the blaze from the gun burnt his shaggy face—but it was all over.

"All except Bruce Stanford standing there with a girl's head against his shoulder; and then I saw her sneak an arm around his neck, and I knew that the thaw had started—"

Harve's voice died away in the quiet of the night. From afar came the yelping bark of the little lone wolf on his nightly round, and the crescent moon, a silver canoe, rode low on the western horizon.